

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claim 2 was previously cancelled, and claim 3 is cancelled herein without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. Claims 1 and 4-9 are pending. Claims 1 and 4-9 are amended. Claim 1 is independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claims 3, 6 and 8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application.

By way of this Amendment, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected to claim 3. Therefore, independent claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Drawings

The Examiner has not indicated whether or not the drawings have been accepted. Clarification is respectfully requested in the next official communication.

Claim for Priority

The Examiner has acknowledged Applicant's claim for foreign priority. Clarification is respectfully requested in the next official communication.

Information Disclosure Citation

Applicant thanks the Examiner for considering the reference supplied with the Information Disclosure Statement filed March 17, 2005, and for providing Applicant with an initialed copy of the PTO form filed therewith.

Restriction Requirement

The Examiner has withdrawn claims 5, 7 and 9 from further consideration. Claims 5, 7 and 9 remain pending. When the elected claims are found to be in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner rejoin withdrawn claims 5, 7 and 9 and allow all pending claims.

Objection to the Specification

In response to the Examiner's objection to the Specification, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 4-9 to eliminate words that were in all capital letters.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the Specification be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has set forth certain instances wherein the claim language lacks antecedent basis or is not clearly understood.

In order to overcome this rejection, Applicant has amended claim 1 to correct each of the deficiencies specifically pointed out by the Examiner. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims, as amended, particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter, which

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Applicant regards as the invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent No. 11-206552 ('552) in view of Fraczek ('430); and

claim 4/1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent '552 and Fraczek ('430), and further in view of European Patent No. 355244.

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Amendments to Independent Claim 1

The Examiner will note that independent claim 1 has been amended to replace the term "CHARACTERIZED IN THAT" with the term "wherein".

As noted above, and while not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected to claim 3.

At least for the reasons explained above, Applicant respectfully submit that the combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 1 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Japanese Patent '552 and Fraczek ('430).

Therefore, independent claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claims

The Examiner will note that dependent claims 4-9 have been amended to replace the term “CHARACTERIZED IN THAT” with the term “wherein”.

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

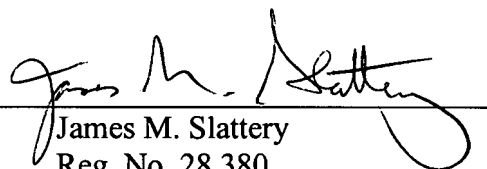
If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen, Registration No. 50,786, at (703) 208-4030 (direct line).

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Dated: October 4, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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